

SENATE BILL 1259

By Reeves

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49  
and Title 68, relative to athletics.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act is known and may be cited as the "Safe Stars Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 68-6-103(b)(1)(B), is amended by deleting the first sentence of the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

Require biennial completion by all coaches, whether the coach is employed or a volunteer, of a sudden cardiac arrest education program approved by the department; provided, that all coaches must complete the training no later than ninety (90) days after the start of the coach's employment or volunteer service, and biennially thereafter. After the coach completes the coach's first sudden cardiac arrest education program, the coach must annually acknowledge in writing that the coach completed the course as required under this subdivision (b)(1)(B), and that the coach understands the requirements and importance of the course.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 68-6-104(b)(1)(B), is amended by deleting the first sentence of the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

Require biennial completion by all coaches, whether the coach is employed or a volunteer, and, if appointed, the licensed healthcare professional of a sudden cardiac arrest education program approved by the department; provided, that all coaches and, if appointed, licensed healthcare professionals must complete the training no later than ninety (90) days after the start of their employment or volunteer service, and biennially thereafter. After the coach or licensed healthcare professional, if appointed, completes the first sudden cardiac arrest education program, the coach or licensed healthcare

professional, if appointed, must annually acknowledge in writing the completion of the course as required under this subdivision (b)(1)(B), and that the requirements and importance of the course are understood.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 68-55-502(b)(1)(B), is amended by deleting the first sentence of the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

Require biennial completion by all coaches, whether the coach is employed or a volunteer, of a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program approved by the department; provided, that all coaches must complete the training no later than ninety (90) days after the start of the coach's employment or volunteer service, and biennially thereafter. After the coach completes the coach's first concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program, the coach must annually acknowledge in writing that the coach completed the course as required under this subdivision (b)(1)(B), and that the coach understands the requirements and importance of the course.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 68-55-503(b)(1)(B), is amended by deleting the first sentence of the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

Require biennial completion by the director of the youth athletic activity, all coaches, whether a coach is employed or a volunteer, and, if appointed, the licensed healthcare professional of a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program approved by the department; provided, that all new directors of youth athletic activities, coaches, and licensed healthcare professionals, if appointed, must complete the training no later than ninety (90) days after the start of their employment or volunteer service, and biennially thereafter. After the director of the youth athletic activity, coach, or licensed healthcare professional, if appointed, completes the first concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program, the director, coach, or

licensed healthcare professional, if appointed, must annually acknowledge in writing the completion of the course as required under this subdivision (b)(1)(B), and that the requirements and importance of the course are understood.

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, is amended by adding the following as a new part:

**49-6-1501.**

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "LEA" has the same meaning as defined in § 49-1-103; and

(2) "School youth athletic activity" has the same meaning as defined in § 68-55-501.

(b) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year for each LEA and public charter school that provides a school youth athletic activity, the following safety standards must be implemented:

(1) All coaches, whether employed by the LEA or public charter school or a volunteer, must:

(A) Biennially complete the concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program required under § 68-55-502, and annually acknowledge in writing that the coach completed the course as required under § 68-55-502;

(B) Biennially complete the sudden cardiac arrest education program required under § 68-6-103, and annually acknowledge in writing that the coach completed the course as required under § 68-6-103;

(C) Receive training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and in the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs); and

(D) Comply with all applicable background check and fingerprinting requirements of § 49-5-413; and

(2) The following plans and policies must be implemented at each public school, including public charter schools, for school youth athletic activities:

(A) An allergy and anaphylaxis emergency response plan that:

(i) Identifies the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions, including severe allergic reactions and anaphylaxis;

(ii) Provides information relating to the storage, location, use, and administration of epinephrine auto-injectors; and

(iii) Includes emergency follow-up procedures;

(B) An emergency action plan that facilitates and organizes the actions of coaches and athletes in an emergency; and

(C) A severe weather policy that requires all coaches who oversee or participate in outdoor training, practice, or competition to biennially:

(i) Complete a heat illness prevention course approved by the department of health; provided, that all coaches must complete the course no later than ninety (90) days after the start of the coach's employment or volunteer service, and biennially thereafter. After the coach completes the first heat illness prevention course, the coach must annually acknowledge in writing that the coach completed the course as required under this subdivision (b)(2)(C)(i), and that the coach understands the requirements and importance of the course; and

(ii) Receive training on activity modifications based on environmental conditions, such as lightning.

(c) Each LEA and public charter school that provides a school youth athletic activity:

(1) Shall develop a code of conduct for coaches; and

(2) Is encouraged to visit the department of health's website to review the safety standards recommended for each level of recognition provided as part of the department's "Safe Stars Initiative", and to communicate with the department to ensure that all safety measures are up to date.

(d)

(1) Private schools, as defined in § 49-6-3001, that provide a school youth athletic activity are encouraged to comply with the safety standards outlined in subsections (b) and (c).

(2) Community-based youth athletic activities, as defined in §§ 68-6-102 and 68-55-501, are encouraged to comply with the safety standards outlined in subsections (b) and (c).

**49-6-1502.**

(a) The department of education and the department of health shall develop and post on the departments' respective websites guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students, parents, and coaches about:

(1) The nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest and the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing one (1) or more symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, which include fainting, difficulty breathing, chest pains, dizziness, and an abnormal racing heart rate;

(2) Electrocardiogram (EKG) testing; and

(3) The student's or parent's option to request, from the student's family medical provider, that an electrocardiogram (EKG) be administered in addition to the student's comprehensive initial pre-participation physical examination, at a cost to be incurred by the student or the student's parent.

(b) The department of education, in collaboration with the department of health, shall develop a sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs information sheet that includes information about electrocardiogram (EKG) testing for purposes of § 49-6-1503. The information sheet must address the benefits and limitations of EKG testing.

(c) In developing the guidelines and materials under subsection (a), the departments may utilize materials developed by outside organizations.

**49-6-1503.**

(a) A student participating in, or seeking to participate in, an athletic activity, and the student's parent or guardian must sign and return to the student's public school an acknowledgement of their receipt and review of a sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs information sheet developed by the department of education that includes information about electrocardiogram (EKG) testing. The acknowledgement form required under this subsection (a) must be signed and returned each year that a student participates in, or seeks to participate in, an athletic activity.

(b) Each LEA and public charter school shall hold an informational meeting before the start of each school athletic season for students, parents, coaches, and school officials to learn about the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest; heat illness; concussions and other head injuries; and other health, safety, and wellness issues related to sports participation, and to receive information about electrocardiogram (EKG) testing and each of the safety plans and policies implemented in the LEA

pursuant to § 49-6-1501(b)(2). Physicians, pediatric cardiologists, and athletic trainers may participate in the informational meeting.

SECTION 7. This act takes effect July 1, 2021, the public welfare requiring it.